The Knights of the Golden Circle
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The Knights of the Golden Circle.

We publish this morning a long and semi-official account of an organization known as the Knights of the Golden Circle. The objects of this organization are said to be to throw obstacles in the way of the government, and to give aid and comfort to the rebellion in every possible way. The exposition which we publish is from the Cairo correspondence of the Chicago Tribune, and purports to be based upon the sworn affidavits of responsible parties. The ceremonies, signs and grips of the order are assumed to be fully explained, and the arrest of a member of Congress and of several other prominent citizens of Southern Illinois is reported. On the whole, the exposition in question is very curious, absurd and interesting, and will well repay perusal.

It strikes us, however, that the attempt to represent this so-called Order as a great conspiracy against the government is silly and pernicious. In our opinion, the Order of the Knights of the Golden Circle is as complete a humbug as the Order of the Sons of Malta, and the two orders very much resemble each other in their signs, grips and ceremonies. Both of these orders were devised by dissipated fellows, with the object of obtaining plentiful free drinks. The pretence that the Knights of the Golden Circle originally intended to filibuster Central America into the Union is just as great a sham and delusion as the pretence that the Sons of Malta designed to filibuster Cuba into the Union. We know all about the Sons of Malta now, and its members freely avow, since the Order has been squelched, that their intention was merely to have a little fun, "soll" a few friends, and indulge in oysters and champagne at the expense of the initiation fees. The Knights of the Golden Circle had no better or worse intention. It is perfect folly to represent them as conspirators and rebel sympathizers, and to give them the credit of widespread organization, powerful supporters and numerous adherents. The exposition which we reprint seriously states that the Order is an organized plan to foment rebellion in our midst, and to encourage armed resistance to the authorities. It charges that the leaders of the Order are in direct communication with the rebels, and that they are armed by the rebels and send recruits to the rebel army. It states that the Knights are sworn to resist the draft and the tax, and have their generals, captains, lieutenants and other officers, who drill them for this purpose. It details the most absurd signs, grips and passwords, but says that, "though absurd, they are not the less likely to be true." It represents that signs are agreed upon by which Northern and Southern members of the Order shall recognize each other in battle and designedly overshoot each other, and by which, when making a bayonet charge, the Northern Knights shall signify their intention to surrender as prisoners without striking a blow. Now, if all this trash were not pernicious to the government, were not hurtful to the Union cause, and were not a great hindrance to enlistments, it would be too nonsensical for notice.

It will be observed, however, that only abolition journals—like the Chicago *Tribune* and New York *Post*—indulge in this sort of sedition, and that the newspapers and the men whom they charge with connection with the Order are uniformly democrats. Some time ago the abolition journals made such a hubbub about the matter that Secretary Seward was seduced into writing a foolish letter to ex-President Pierce, asking him if he really belonged to such an organization. Of course the ex-President, like any other gentleman, knew nothing of the Order except through the newspapers, and returned a most polite but decided negative to the Secretary's inquiry. We are glad, however, that this circumstance did not wholly silence all mention of the Order, because we think that this is a very proper occasion to summarily extinguish a real conspiracy against the government which the charges against this Order merely conceal. In other words, we believe that the fuss raised about the Knights of the Golden Circle is simply another shrewd device of the abolition organs to divide the North and hinder enlistments. Here are newspapers seriously stating that a great conspiracy against the government and in favor of Jeff. Davis exists throughout the loyal States, and numbers its conspirators by thousands. Is not this calculated to afford aid and comfort to the enemy? Here are journals solemnly representing that the great mass of democrats and the great majority of democratic newspapers in the North are secretly sworn allies of the rebels. Is not this giving comfort to the enemy and attempting to divide and weaken the North? Here are journals deliberately stating that thousands of our soldiers are ready and willing to lay down their arms and surrender to the rebels. Is not this giving aid and comfort to the enemy? Here are journals not only admitting the possibility and probability of resistance to the draft and the tax, but actually announcing that preparations of a gigantic character are already made to support such resistance with arms. Is not this aiding and comforting the enemy and embarrassing the government? And are not all such statements as those to which we refer directly in violation of Secretary Stanton's order prohibiting all writing and speaking calculated to discourage enlistments? There can be but one answer to these questions, and our special provost marshals ought to make that answer sufficiently peremptory and emphatic.

The whole truth of the matter is, that the abolitionists and republicans are now very greatly disturbed in regard to the coming Congressional elections. They very much fear that they are to be soundly and effectually thrashed, and we hope that their fears may prove well grounded. It is for this reason that they are so very fond, just now, of calling every man a traitor and a rebel sympathizer who does not agree with and vote with them. It is for this reason that they are boldly representing an organization of bummers, like the Knights of the Golden Circle, as an armed conspiracy of democratic politicians. It is for this reason that they repeatedly charge that democrats, now fighting for the country which abolitionists stay at home and assail, are armed opponents of the draft and the tax. It is for this reason that some of our soldiers, and even some of our major-generals, are accused of favoring the rebels and desiring to be defeated by them. It is all an old electioneering dodge, revived under new circumstances; but it is a dodge which is very injurious to our cause, very hurtful to enlistments, and which will be, if our officers do their duty, very dangerous to those who have conceived and are executing it.